

## **We Help Each Other by Mileventhings**

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**Summary:** Set a few months after S2. Implied Hopper and El live with the Byers'. Mike is jealous of El and Will's close relationship and misses the days when El was overly affectionate towards Mike.

## **We Help Each Other**

Mike POV

As I stand just outside his closed door I can hear whispering from inside the room. Two voices. My stomach turns.

I remember the days when she would wait hours by the front door for me and give me the biggest hug when I finally arrived. I miss her.

No that's not right. She's still in my life, more than ever actually. I'm so lucky I don't have to miss her anymore. Because she's here. And it's so painful to miss her.

What I miss is how she used to care about me. And me alone. Does that make me a horrible person? The fact that I wish I was still her whole world? She's still my whole world.

I burst into Will's room to find them both kneeling on the ground, hugging.

"Hey, what's going on?" I ask light-heartedly, trying to pretend my insides aren't on fire. I've gotten very good at that. I can fool almost everyone now. I can make people think I'm perfectly ok when I'm falling apart. Except for one person. El can always see right through me.

She can see right through me now. She can tell something's not right with me. Luckily she's gotten better at judging social situations these past few months and I now she'll wait to ask me what's wrong until we're alone.

"Uhhm, nothing much" stuttered Will. The second I walked through the door they flew apart at a record breaking speed.

El walks up to Will and whispers something in his ear. What could she be saying to him that she doesn't want me to hear? She then kisses him on the cheek and follows me out of Will's room while I burst into flames.

We get to El's room and she shuts the door with a slight jerk of her

head. I automatically wipe the hint of blood from her nose when I stop myself.

She kissed Will. On the cheek sure, but they live under the same roof. And they're not actually related. It's perfectly plausible that they may have kissed other places too. What if she doesn't want to be my girlfriend anymore? What if? What if? What if?

I can feel my brain whirring around in circles in my head so fast I can't keep up, so fast I can't catch it. What if? What if? What if?

"Breathe" she said holding my hands.

She always knows.

"What's wrong?"

Looking into her huge eyes, I just couldn't lie.

"Do you still want to be my girlfriend?" I asked her, shutting my eyes, preparing my heart for the answer.

"Yes" she seemed taken aback. "I like when we hold hands, and watch movies, and talk, and when you teach me things, and when you don't think I'm a weirdo and when we...kiss"

My heart grew three sizes watching a pale pink blush enshroud her face.

But then I remembered the problem.

"Why do you spend so much time with Will? Why are you two always whispering and hugging? You can tell me anything you know, I'll keep all your secrets. I've never told anyone anything you said to me about what they did to you in the lab. If you want to be his girlfriend and kiss him instead you have to tell me"

She started to laugh. Her laugh is the greatest sound on the planet. Except I couldn't figure out what she could possibly be laughing at.

"You are my boyfriend. You are the only person I like *that* way. I promise. Will is like.. my brother. It's like you and Nancy."

I let out a sigh of relief so loud I think the commies in Russia heard me.

El just kept laughing. I understood the joke now.

But something still didn't add up.

"Then why do you spend so much time with him? Why are you two always whispering?"

El was quiet.

Despite just being reassured, I feared the worst.

"It's... a secret"

"But we always tell each other secrets. It's what we do! Besides, keeping a secret is the same thing as lying!"

"But it's not my secret, it's Will's"

"You know, before you came along, I was the one Will told his secrets to."

"Ok I'll tell you" she said slowly.

"But you have to promise you won't tell the others"

"I promise" Since I met El, those two words suddenly carried a lot more weight.

"Will has bad dreams at night. About the Upside Down and the... Demogorgan. He gets scared sometimes. He feels cold inside and sad and can't breathe. I help. I can help because I understand. I get the bad dreams too. Almost every night. But I dream about Papa as well.

I told Hopper about them before and Will told Joyce. But we're old now. We don't want to make them scared. We help each other instead."

I feel like someone knocked the wind out of me. El was having nightmares all this time and I didn't know? How could I not know?

And Will too? I was so obsessed with jealousy I couldn't see what was happening right in front of me. After everything Will and El have been through, it makes perfect sense that they need to talk to each other about it, the only other person in the world who gets it. I'm a horrible person.

"I'm so sorry I've been acting crazy, I've just been so afraid that you didn't want to be with me anymore, that you wanted to be with Will. I've been so jealous, I'm so sorry"

"Jealous? What does mean?"

"It means that thinking about you kissing anybody but me, even talking too much with someone other than me made me feel sick. Jealousy is a bad thing. I'm so sorry I got mad."

El started to blush again and let out a little giggle.

"What's so funny?"

"I felt that with you and Max before. But she told me she likes Lucas, not you"

"You were jealous of Max?"

Does it make me a bad person that this information makes me really happy? That's why she didn't talk to Max when she first came back!

"A little, maybe"

"Pushing her off her skateboard with your mind doesn't count as a little jealous, El"

El is pretty much the colour of a tomato now.

"But don't worry, if I had your powers, I would've push Will off a hundred skateboards by now."

I love making El laugh. It's the best sound I've ever heard. Suddenly she stops.

"You're still sad. Why?"

Can she read minds? Is that one of her powers?

" Wha..? I'm not sad. Why would I be sad" I say extremely unconvincingly.

El just looks at me.

Is it weird that we haven't known each other that long and she still knows everything little thing I'm feeling?

"This is really embarrassing and I'm sorry I'm being a total mouth breather but... uhmm why...\*clears throat\*, why haven't you been as happy to see me lately? You used to hug me the second I would walk in the door. I miss it"

God, could I be more corny?

El paused like she was really thinking about her answer. Whenever she gets like this I can she's going to say a lot of words altogether, more than usual. I hate that she has to struggle like this just to form single sentences. Thinking about that makes me think about Hawkins Lab and everything they did to her, and made her do. Which makes me feel sick to my stomach and sets my insides on fire for a reason totally separate from my extinguished jealousy.

"When I saw you I was afraid you were a dream. A good dream. The best dream. I hugged you and hold your hand to see you're real. I don't need to do that anymore. I know you're real. I know you will be here always. I feel safe now. I feel like this won't disappear and I won't wake up in my room in the lab. I'm happy. I still have bad dreams that make me sad. But I'm happy."

I tell her I have an eyelash in my eye and that's why they're watering. I don't think she believes me. El always knows.

"So do you want to get Will and watch a movie?" I ask El, trying to pull myself together.

"No...just us" she says with a little grin which I think is possibly the best thing I've ever seen.